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THE VESTAL:

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

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READER—should'st thou, with kindly eye, peruse
The simple tracings of my humble page ;
And thy yet guileless heart should not abuse
My trust, with shapings of malicious rage—

Behold a nature, haply like thine own,
Kind unto kindness, loving unto love ;
A woman, to remonstrant tears alone ;
But iron, when a frowning world would move.

But, if thine eye doth lour o'er my book ;
And malice turn thy life's fresh blood to gall ;
And things most blessed, in thy morbid look
Seem curs'd, and hideous through thy temper's pall ;

Ah ! then, I cannot scorn thee ; cannot hate ;
Poor child of Spleen ! thou need'st no hate of mine.
Thy fearful chastisement is in the fate
To bear about thee such a heart as thine.

“Territi etiam super tantas clades, cum ceteris prodigiis, tum quod duæ Vestales eo anno, Opimia atque Floronia, violato voto, altera sub terrâ, ut mos est, ad portam Collinam necata fuerat; altera sibimet ipsa mortem consciverat.”

TIT. LIV. lib. xxii. cap. 57.

They were also dismayed, in addition to these losses, as well by other prodigies, as, moreover, because two Vestal virgins, in that year, Opimia and Floronia, having violated their vow, the one had been put to death, according to custom, by living interment at the gate Collina; the other had committed suicide.



THE VESTAL.

PART I.

I.

LIKE a fair Sorceress, the black rob'd Night—
Her pallid face, which warms not with its light,
Fair in unearthly loveliness, her zone
Set round with silver stars,—ascends her throne;
And spell-bound in the light of those wan eyes,
The Earth, beneath, in ghastly beauty lies.

Pure as the chastity which worships there,
That orb'd temple lifts its columns fair,
Of stainless marble, o'er the billowy trees;
Like some bleach'd rock above the dark green seas.

Nightly, within that fane, the Vestal quire
Hymn in their watchings round th' eternal fire.
Listen ! how sweetly rose, how softly fell,
The choir of voices from the inmost cell !
Hark ! now it rises on the wing, once more,
O'er sleeping Rome, and Tiber's winding shore,—
Glides down the calm, clear air,—and finds its rest,
With folded pinion, in the passive breast.
Now it is hush'd for ever—and the Night
Again sleeps sweetly, wrapp'd in silver light.

II.

The latest, ling'ring note, has left the earth
For Heaven : though the lips that gave it birth
Still vibrate ; and the chord within the breast,
Struck by devotion, trembles into rest.
But lips may speak when hearts are far away :
And *one* is there, whose fix'd, sad eyes betray
The absence of the spirit ; and the thought
Of worship, with which other breasts are fraught.

III.

The suns of eighteen summers lent their glow
To the bright hair, which, parted on her brow,
Flow'd o'er her purple mantle, round her face
And bosom, such as Phidias lov'd to trace ;
The Pallas brow ; and eye, large, blue, and clear ;
But not, as in the Warrior Maid, severe :
This, fraught with immortality, revealing
Its heav'nly birth ;—*That*, mild, with mortal feeling.
Speaking a spirit, which, if not all fire
To die, or to obtain each dear desire ;
Yet, never lov'd but once,—and, like the dove
On her dead mate, died on its first—last, love !

IV.

Yes ! still we cherish, love the fragile thing
Who clings to us, like Ivy round the tree :
Whose eyes look up to ours, as to the spring
Of all their hopes—fears—pleasures—misery.

This!—this is *Woman*! Be the counterpart
Of fierce Penthesilea deified.—

Man seeks a pillow for his aching heart :

God knows he needeth nought to prompt his pride !

V.

Yes! She was from that land, glorious and fair,
The birth-place of Young Art, who's buried there.
Where Mind exalted Form to that Ideal
Our ages deem too perfect to be real.
Where liv'd th' immortal models, which she gave
To Time—the Wise, the Beautiful, the Brave ;
The myrtle, and the sword.—In war, in peace,
The mightiest, and the loveliest,—matchless Greece !
Land of th' immortal Lyre! could I refrain,
Thinking on thee, this tributary strain !
No! may this heart be still ; these lips be dumb ;
My thoughts, the people of the silent tomb ;
The nightly dream, the daily flame, expire ;
When I refrain—Land of th' immortal Lyre !

VI.

Corinth, her place of birth,—her sire, a chief—
One who sprang forth in arms, to hail the brief,
Bright flame, which, on Achaia's mountains fir'd,
Flash'd forth in Philopœmen—and expir'd.
Companion of that "last of Greeks," he died,
Transfix'd by Grecian javelins, at his side.
And then, she shrunk, as shrinks the timid fawn,
To her lone mother's side. Their bosoms, shorn
Of one strong tie, together closing, clove :
Loving as the bereav'd alone can love.
And that deep, tranquil feeling, till the prime
Of girlhood, fill'd her heart ; until the time,
The mystic minute, fated to reveal
The unknown world of love her heart could feel.

VII.

Young Timon was of Corinth ; where his sire
Walk'd in the reverence wisdom doth inspire ;

The city's hoary guide. From earliest youth
His steps were bent towards the fount of Truth.
For *that* he did not deem it hard to die,
Ev'n as *one had* died, calm and joyfully.
But, for the bloody trade of war and strife,
He loath'd it : and condemn'd it by his life.
Yet, when his voice was ask'd, he never gave
One foot of ground to tyrants ; or one slave ;
But sighing, clos'd his book, and quench'd his lamp ;
Then, drew the blade which age's icy cramp
Shook in his grasp ; and they whom once he led
In peaceful wisdom, still before them bled.

From that sire's lips and life, his infancy
Drew its first notions of the great and free :
Follow'd his footsteps, and beneath the eye
Of him who gave him life, learn'd how to die.
A glorious, but a mournful lot, to stand
Alone a Greek, in that degen'rate land !
To emulate the noble and the brave,
Where breathe alone the coward and the slave !

VIII.

'Tis strange that fiercer natures e'er should seek

For rest on bosoms innocent and meek.

But thus it is,—at least among mankind,—

The Lion consorts with the gentle Hind.

And thus did Timon's wise and gentle sire,

Of Ida's, veil and damp the eager fire.

And when he died, and, from the last red field,

Came, with his dying words, his stainless shield,

Deep did his wife and gentle girl partake

Of loving care ; shed on them for his sake.

IX.

And thus, from infancy, did two hearts grow

Into an union, such alone can know.

Alas ! could few short months, or years, impart

To spell-bound eyes the knowledge of a heart,

Some gentle ones had known a milder fate,

Which since have broke o'er what they learn'd too late !

But *these*, the very breaks, that will appear
In the most perfect natures, dwelling here ;
All known, but serv'd as links, that closer bind,
To the forgiven, the forgiving mind.
Thus grew their twined lives, and thus for ever
Must grow. Those stems no mortal hand can sever
Which have one root. And thus, though they might die,
And in two tombs their parted dust might lie ;
Yet, living, but one home could hold the two.
Their mutual life from mutual breath they drew.
And when he grew a warrior, still more dear
Each seem'd to each, from mutual pride and fear.
She, from each fight more precious saw him come ;
He, fought for Corinth, and his Ida's home.

X.

'Twas when the tide of fierce invasion, near,
Render'd each span of country doubly dear :
And fiercer, at the closing hounds of Rome,
Th' Achæan struck, in dying, for his home.

The Morn yet struggled with retreating Night,
Whose sable army fled her hosts of light ;
Rising from weary dreams, young Ida stray'd
Where the green height, wood, plain, and stream survey'd.
The kiss upon her brow was glowing yet,
His lips had printed when the sun last set ;
His parting words were ringing in her ears,
With which he strove to mock away her fears :
They were *not* mock'd ; for here she stood alone,
To tread where he had trod, and gaze where he had gone.

And yet, to-morrow's sun would see him come,
Her Hector, to his well-defended home.
And then, when next he parted from her side,
She need not veil the tears of Timon's *bride*.
'Twas but a day ! But, when a day is rife
With all the joy or misery of a life ;
Within that circle gather all the fears,
Into one inky band, of outstretch'd years.
Before, that heart had found it hard to hate
E'en them, the workers of her country's fate ;

But now, her mind grew dark against the foe,
Whose hosts seem'd only leagu'd to work her woe.
Each falchion's stroke directed at one crest ;
And each spear pointed at the one dear breast.

XI.

Th' Ægean's early wave is brightly dancing ;
Streams and white temples in the morning glancing ;
Greece lifts her dewy veil ; and waking, smiles
Through all her coasts, and all her hundred isles.
But billows danc'd, and morning shone in vain :
Her thoughts were straying far o'er hill and plain.
And saw, beyond the barrier of the sight,
The tenfold horrors of the fancied fight.
Slowly she turn'd her gushing eye away
From where th' horizon's torturing stillness lay.
From cheek to brow th' indignant colour flew ;
While to the east this wild appeal she threw.
“ See'st thou, unfailing God ! thy broken shrine ?
“ Thy oracle, no longer deem'd divine ?

“ And smil’st on them, eternally the same,
“ Who smite thy people, and despise thy name ?”
Her eye yet gaz’d upon the orb which shone,
Unmov’d, in still increasing splendour on,
When, winding round the steep, a band of horse
Sent under night to read the city’s force,
Encircled, with a shout, their timid prey.—
The struggling, shrieking girl, they bore away,
Safe to Messenia’s camp. But Ida’s doom
Was not the servile labour of the loom.
A proud Patrician of Imperial Rome
Purchas’d the prize; and bore it to his home.
For Vesta’s holy service set aside;
An off’ring of his piety—or pride.

XII.

By Tyber’s wave there is a lonely spot,
A turf-pav’d path, that leads beneath the shade
Of dusky woods, towards a little grot;
A rustic temple, that rude hands have made

Out of the living rock. And grey, of stone,
An uncouth shrine within, by moss o'ergrown :
Forth from whose base, a pure and gelid spring
Doth issue clear, with ceaseless murmuring ;
Then hastes, with fretful bound, to lose its way
Through hoary groves, that hide it from the day.
Thither, with listless step, and downcast eye,
In which sat Rev'rie, brooding mournfully,
Sad Ida turns her steps ; to fill, as wont,
The sacred vase from out the crystal font.

XIII.

It is the middle night—Silence and Sleep
Are in the seven-hill'd city's dwellings : save
The ceaseless laving of the mimic wave,
Where Tyber's plaining waters seek the deep.
Yet cannot this still scene and hour bring peace
To Ida's mind, whose thoughts are on her Greece.
Her land of birth, whose hills and woods are sleeping
Beneath that moon, on which she gazes weeping.

Fair Corinth ; and her home, and playmates dear,
Whose joyous voices ring upon her ear.
And that kind face she never can forget,
Her Mother—does she live, and love her yet ?
He, too ; beneath whose kindling eye, her own
First lit with passion until then unknown ;
Slain—or an exile from his native shore—
Or, keenest mis'ry, thinks of her no more.
Thus mournful Fancy conjur'd up the past,
The welling tear-drop gushing big and fast,
As, wrapp'd within her veil, she linger'd, slow,
Down the steep path and through the wood below.
And now her feet have past the forest shade,
And noiseless press the open, moonlit glade,
Where, at one end, upon a rising ground,
The grotto stood ; with woods behind and round.
The cynosure of that sweet solitude,
Where never feet profane their steps intrude.

XIV.

And Ida now ascends the gentle hill
Down which, releas'd, bounds light the sacred rill.
When, lo ! beside the cave, upon the steep,
A form is stretch'd, compos'd, as if in sleep.
Startl'd, she stood. Why doth not Ida fly ?
Alas ! the well-known garb hath caught her eye.
Her native garb, that seem'd to her to be
The only vesture of the brave and free.
Too well she knew, in terror had she fled,
He still might sleep, unrous'd—among the dead.
With feet that gave no echo—and with eye
Still fix'd on him who slept—she glideth by—
Deeply he sleeps—one step—and she hath won
The fount—one step—she stands as she were stone !
The vase is on the earth ! her veil is thrown
Back ! quickly back ! and she is stooping down ;
Her timid eyes all eager strain'd, to trace
Each manly feature of that sleeping face !

XV.

Chang'd as it is, yet answers ev'ry part,
Full well, th' unfading image in her heart.
Not Time alone, but wan and haggard Care
Hath written, with his pen of iron, there ;
Upon the brow whose lofty swell once shone,
Smooth, as if chisell'd from the Parian stone.
More threat'ning, too, beneath that alter'd brow,
Stern thought hath sunk the eye that's veil'd below.
While the clos'd lips compression spake, too sure,
All he'd endured—and could yet endure.
In marble calmness, in the moon's pale day,
Slept the stern sadness of that head ; which lay
Still as an infant's ; but, the heaving breast
Belied the seeming calmness of his rest.
Never, more fondly, o'er her nestled boy,
The child of her first love ; her mournful joy ;
Breathless, the youthful mother bends to trace
The tracks of fierce convulsion in his face—

Than Ida bent in joyous, sad amaze,
'Till truth seem'd vision to her wilder'd gaze.
Oh, joy! to meet him any where; for whom
Hope long since died: yes—even in the tomb.
But, ah! that face—how chang'd! how sad a tale
Of suff'ring, written in those features pale!

XVI.

And now, beyond control, the hot tears fall
O'er him who slept.—He wakes—but yet the thrall
Of sleep is on him—and his waking grasp
Is on the falchion, ready to his clasp.—
Instead of hostile eyes, he woke to meet
Those of the startled maiden at his feet.
Is this a dream? He springs to clasp again
Her whom his dreams had often clasp'd in vain!
It is *no* dream! but living, throbbing, warm,
His arms enfold his Ida's cherish'd form.
Yet, far too wild for speech that strange amaze:
For minutes eye meets eye in silent gaze.—

But chords have each their pitch ; o'erstrained, they break.
She gave a short, wild laugh—a stifled shriek—
Then sunk upon his shoulder, with the sigh
And gasping spasm of woman's agony.
Her cry recall'd his wand'ring sense—in haste
He bore her to the rocky grot—there, plac'd
On the rude seat, her forehead gently laves
In the cold crystal of the earth-born waves.

XVII.

Long shook, the strife of joy and grief, her form,
Whose tender grace seem'd rent beneath the storm.
At length the tempest sank into the calm
Of tears ; which, silent, shed their soothing balm
Upon the breast, where, pillow'd like a child,
Her brain recall'd its thoughts, still straying wild.
“ My Ida ! can it be ! I thought that fate
“ Had made this life the object of its hate !
“ But now, I do believe that happiness
“ May yet be mine—since thou dost live to bless—

“ Yes—to bless me. For, albeit thou *art*
“ *Theirs*, thou *wast mine*, and never more we part !”
“ *Theirs* ! Yes ! I *am* theirs ! detain me not !
“ Yes ! well thou did’st remind—I had forgot—
“ This veil—they wait.”—She stood—and gather’d round
Her form the fleecy veil which swept the ground.
Then, as he sprung to stay her, with her hand,
And eye, though swimming, threat’ning in command,
Check’d him, and said,—“ The dead and living now
“ Are not more separate than I and thou.”
She turn’d, and would have gone—but it is past,
The strength delirium gave, too fierce to last—
And staggering with looks of wild alarm,
Corse-like and cold she sunk upon his arm.

XVIII.

So deeply tangl’d was her thoughts’ fair chain,
It seem’d its strength would ne’er return again.
At length, her head slow rais’d, her hands repel
The golden tresses, that dishevell’d fell

O'er her clear features, and her eyes, which, bright
With tears, shed tenderly their mild, blue light
In one long, loving look. "So chang'd ! it seems
"Another mock'ry of my happiest dreams !
"And *here* how cam'st thou ? Yes ! I read too well,
"In that sad face, all that thy tongue will tell.
"Does *she* yet live ? ah, no ! it cannot be !
"How could *I* live, my mother ! far from thee !
"And Corinth ?—Yes ! I now remember—here
"There was a triumph—yes ! a triumph—ne'er
"Shall I forget that day—the Roman car
"Heap'd with the spoils, barbarians as they are,—
"Spoils that they could not value—and that train
"Of drooping captives, where I look'd in vain
"For her and thee—ah, no !—that thou would'st die
"I knew—but not"—she starts ! for from that eye,
In which she gaz'd, leap'd forth the living fire !
Never before on her with aught like ire
Had turn'd that face—which writh'd to keep below
Th' expression of the heart's indignant throe.

“ Yes ! *I* too saw, and would, as thou hast said—
“ This coward, useless corse, had swell’d the dead
“ Who block’d th’ invader’s path ! I liv’d—but *why*
“ Ask thine own heart—’twas easier far to die.
“ But shrink not, *Ida dear* ! thou did’st not mean
“ To wound me—listen what the cause hath been
“ Why I am here. Then, if thou can’st, yet more
“ Than now, the blood-stain’d faith of Rome abhor.
“ Yet, not so much that name I execrate
“ As *their’s*, who gave us helpless to our fate.
“ Oh ! had we been indeed *their* countrymen,
“ Whose blood made glorious their mountain glen—
“ —They triumph not o’er Greeks—the last one fell
“ In that Old Man who perish’d in his cell.

XIX.

“ I cannot tell—no words can speak alone
“ My feelings, when I heard that thou wast gone.
“ Fire in the brain, and sickness in the heart—
“ A moment, in which mem’ry hath no part.

“ Flung on my horse, alone I rav’d to go,
“ And tear their captive from the coward foe.
“ While sudden rushing from her plunder’d roof,
“ And dash’d at length beneath my courser’s hoof,
“ With hair dishevell’d, and with words as wild,
“ Thy frantic mother ask’d of *me* her child !—
“ But hands more calm restrain’d me, and with speed
“ Each youthful friend equipp’d his fleetest steed.
“ Then in a band that would have torn their prey
“ From hosts, or died, we dash’d upon our way.
“ In vain, in vain, with hopes that still deceive,”
“ O’er plain and hill we rode from morn till eve.
“ Too fleetly mounted, or too well conceal’d,
“ No trace of them or thee was e’er revealed.
“ At length, benighted on Messenia’s plain,
“ Our warriors urg’d the bloody spur in vain.
“ Unfed, unrested, since the middle day,
“ Each panting steed scarce stagger’d on his way.
“ Dismounting there, in haste, I laid aside
“ The gallant trappings of the warrior’s pride.

- “ With sandall’d feet, and cloak of sober hue,
“ In wandering cynic’s guise, I bade adieu
“ To them, my faithful band ; whose earnest pray’r
“ Would stay me—’twas in vain—we parted there.
“ ’Twere long, at such a moment, now to tell
“ The thousand hopes and perils which befel.
“ A year had past ; and I had wander’d o’er
“ Each plain ; and through each city of our shore.
“ Wherever hope seem’d dawning, thither sped
“ My eager steps—alas ! it always fled.
“ At length, still fed on shadows, hope expir’d.
“ The heart that love had warm’d now vengeance fir’d.
“ How my cheek burn’d to mark the crafty slave !
“ The abject Greek who till’d the Persian’s Grave !
“ A subtle sophist, now, on freedom’s side ;
“ Then, proving, for the Roman gold, he lied.
“ Proud of their names whose glory was his shame :
“ Vain boaster, and dishonour of their fame.
“ Coldly I homeward turn’d my listless pace ;
“ Blighted at heart, and blushing for my race.

“ While, day by day, the circle narrower grew
“ Of slaves and tyrants round th’ unfetter’d few.
“ Despair has not a fear—let him beware,
“ Who hunts a patriot to his inmost lair !
“ The Latin wolf, whose mountain cave is strown
“ With relics of mankind, except her own
“ Who brooks no freedom, madden’d, when the steel
“ Of freemen taught her, in her turn, to feel.
“ At last, with such respects as fits the free
“ Who commune with the free, and specious plea,
“ Their Senate sent to Corinth, to demand
“ A chosen number of the Achæan band
“ In Rome’s proud Capitol should vindicate
“ Their claims to freedom, in a calm debate.

XX.

“ Lur’d by the falsehood of the coward slave
“ Who wisely steals the sword he fears to brave.
“ A thousand of our bravest, from the main,
“ Look’d on that land they ne’er shall tread again.

“ Pass’d o’er the sea, and on this perjur’d shore,
“ In *exile* found the rights the Roman swore.
“ *Me* they sent not from Rome. My unfledg’d years,
“ And arm, though prov’d, alone, mov’d not their fears.
“ Then—but thou may’st have guess’d—I loathe to tell
“ The tale of bloody treachery—Corinth fell !
“ Had I but deem’d that thou had’st been so nigh—
“ But see ! that light !—they seek thee—let us fly !”
He spake, and rose—one hand was round the maid ;
The other grasp’d his broad and shining blade—
She spake not, nor resisted. To expire,
With *him*, was more than she had dar’d desire.
But, spar’d the terrors of a hopeless flight,
They scarce had left the grot, when, by the light
Of night’s high noon, emerging from the shade,
A wall of fierce, dark faces, lin’d the glade.
She started—shrunk—and shriek’d in wild despair,
Too well she knows the fate that waits her there.
Too well she knows what bigot cruelty
Can fire religion’s meek and heav’n-ward eye !

The hard, relentless heart, man's cheated sight
Deems not can lurk beneath the robe of white !
She shrunk—and for a moment ebb'd the tide
Of woman's generous love—then, from his side
She broke—"Fly ! Fly ! 'tis not too late—
"Timon ! thou know'st not—can'st not guess the fate
"That waits us if thou stay'st !—fear not for me—
"That path—farewell !—there, flee ! oh ! quickly flee !"
She spake—she wav'd her hand—and she is gone !
Starting with outstretch'd arms he stands alone.
His eye but sees that robe of glittering white
Glance down the hill—then vanish from his sight.
Then—shall he fly ? and leave her ? while a fate,
Which thus appals, impends ? Alas ! too late
His flight, ev'n had he fled. No ! they who dwell
In the dark mystery of Vesta's cell,
Dwell in the glance of eyes that ever keep,
Go where they will, vigils that never sleep !
And those stern, viewless guardians, through the night,
Had mark'd their meeting—and now check'd their flight.

XXI.

Her vanish'd form still floated in his mind—
When stern, quick tones spake startling from behind.
“Surrender, Greek”—He starts!—and, looking round,
At length discerns the toils by which he's bound.—
He bent his mind to die; but not to hold
His hands in tame submission for the fold
Of bonds: or worse, to feel *their* pitying scorn,
Hateful for all that he and his have borne.
No! 'twas but shedding *now* the blood he ow'd
To Corinth, which, ev'n *there*, had vainly flow'd.
“Old man, away! I war not with a priest—
“I fall—but by a warrior's sword at least.”
Then, waiting not until they clos'd around,
Through the arm'd ring he broke with one strong bound.
And down where she had pass'd he onward press'd
With vigorous speed—a sword is at his breast!
A fierce, rude veteran of the iron band
Which guards the bounds of Dacia's frozen land,

Threw his broad form across the Grecian's path—
And, grimly smiling, more in scorn than wrath,
“ Youth, yield thy sword ! ”—He little knew the might
T'ought that young arm in many a hopeless fight.—
A clash—a gleam—a vain attempt to ward—
The Achæan blade is buried to the guard !
Yet Timon bleeds ! but not by him he slew :
A hand unseen the treach'rous javelin threw.
And ere his sword had dealt its mortal wound,
His own best blood was curdling on the ground.

 In that last blow was spent his ebbing might :
A misty veil is o'er his failing sight.
His will directs his reeling steps in vain,
He staggers, groans, then falls upon the slain.

P A R T I I.

I.

Oh, world of beauty ! Glorious light of day !
What heart, without regret, can pass away
From your live lustre, to the untried gloom
That veils the frowning portals of the tomb ?
No ! pain, without a pause, of tameless pow'r,
May swell each ling'ring moment to an hour :
And wintry age set in ; cold, dark, and dreary,
Without a hope, or solace to the weary :
And Death, with his deep sleep, should seem a friend :
But life, and light, and air, are precious to the end.
How precious, then, in youth's unwither'd spring,
That's rife with love of ev'ry beauteous thing ;

Op'ning, like magic, to the tearless eyes
That live in love, and pleasure, and surprise !
Enjoyment's path before, to Hope's high fane !
Mirth, music, flowers, without the thorns of pain !
And dear companions round, to whom we give
Souls unreserv'd ; and in whose life we live !
How precious ! and, if, in those jocund hours,
A voice should reach thee, in thy myrtle bow'rs,
Congealing into silence ev'ry tone
That fills the air, and syllable alone,
In stern and cold monotony, thy name !
Calling thee forth from love, and friends, and fame ;
And life's gay banquet, ere it half be sped ;
To nameless, distant dwellings of the dead :—
Then—tell me—then, what pang would pierce thy heart ?—
Or, could'st thou calm, *without* a pang depart ?—

II.

Shine on thy brightest, thou bright Sun ! thy light
Will gild to-day a gladsome nuptial rite !
Youth, in whose nostrils swells the lib'ral breath
Of fullest life, the Bride of bony Death !
And smil'st thou not upon the festal train
Of hoary Superstition?—And the chain
Which is her bridal wreath?—And that cold bed
Where life shall meet th' embraces of the dead ?

III.

Detested ! shapeless idol ! in whose eye
Man quails with fears he knows not whence, nor why.
Still sitt'st thou proud and shameless on thy base,
Pale hearted mortals' terror and disgrace,
Dark Superstition !—Reeking with the gore
Of ages stands thy shrine, and thirsts for more.
Yet earth doth vomit forth the blood that's shed
For thee.—The populous cities of the dead,

Which thou hast peopled, lift a gen'ral cry
That moves the ear of Heaven! and on high
The arm is rais'd! the bolt flames! that shall burst
Through thy dark groves, and shiver thee to dust!

IV.

Lovely! the form of woman in her youth,
Ere Time hath clasp'd her in his arm uncouth!
Noble! the quiv'ring might, in ev'ry vein,
Of the young steed man hath not dar'd to rein!
But nobler! lovelier! a people free,
Clad in the unbadg'd garb of liberty!
Who have not bow'd, in tameless virtue strong,
Their necks to tyrants, or their souls to wrong!
And such was Rome; before her Emperors gave
Their purple livery to their fawning slave.
Then, she grew base and vile—but go, and see
What one that was so great may sometime be!
And such be all, just God! whose selfish hands,
Unbound, would hold their fellow-men in bands!

V.

How sultry, through the teeming city's air,
The steady flame of garish noon doth glare !
Vast hive of human insects ! Ev'ry one
Busy with plans and projects of his own !
Springs, wheels, by other springs and wheels unseen,
Unknown, yet working in one vast machine !
To-day some deep intent is rife among
The varied natures of the city's throng.
The Forum's space is throng'd : yet surge on surge
Still spreads its numbers round th' arena's verge.
What gen'ral theme of joy hath gather'd there
The crowd, whose hot breaths taint th' unprisoned air ?
What new-erected idol seeks applause
By standing 'twixt the rabble and the laws ?
No !—triumph or rebellion doth not strain
Man's bosom with the deep-drawn breath of pain.
Nor then doth woman clasp her throat and sigh
With dark, self-torturing curiosity.

Alas, for Man ! whose nature takes delight
In sternest objects, so they but excite.
And woman too ! doth *she* not gaze and fly,
And gaze again, on sights of reddest dye ?
But loathe him not for this : thou can'st not see
What wheels this spring may move, unknown to thee.

VI.

But who the youth who stands beside that stake
Bare to the girdle ? Why that bloody strake
Scoring his side ? unblemish'd as the stone
From which the Day-God's youthful form hath grown.
Pale, as that statuary stone, his cheek :
Drooping his eye, like one that's spent and weak :
And that cold, flagging lip's dull tint of lead
Would seem to claim some kindred with the dead.
Can terror blench his cheek and quell his eye ?
'Tis hard for *all*, and *most* for *youth*, to die.
No ! 'tis not terror—Timon could not fear
To find what he hath often sought for, here.

And if the aim be true, and stroke well dealt,
The keenness of the axe is not more felt
Than of the sword, which lays him, in the field,
To welter into death upon his shield.
And were he free, yet ne'er should ebb again
The precious tide, through each exhausted vein.
Too deep, that night, the thirsty javelin drank,
For Life to fill again her fleshly tank.
But, see! the axe-arm'd lictor doth command
The crowd to silence, with uplifted hand.—
With fix'd but pitying eye, that show'd him mild
In a stern law—perchance he had a child—
The hoary Consul, from his purple seat,
Rises, with words each ear is turn'd to meet.
“Greek! if I read aright that failing eye,
“Thou wilt not find the struggle great to die.
“But, she, whose awful sanctions thou hast broke,
“May not be cheated by the lictor's stroke.
“She hath decreed—and, by her dreaded name!
“Her virgin priesthood! and eternal flame!

“ Long as the rock-built Capitol shall stand,
“ Must be fulfill’d the words of her command !—
“ She hath decreed, that those who soil her shrine
“ With human lust, as thou hast done with thine,
“ The wretched girl, who lit that impious lust,
“ Shall mingle quick, and breathing, with the dust !
“ And thee—the scourge, before the face of Rome,
“ Must drive thy soul from its dishonour’d home !
“ This is the doom. In vain thou would’st deny
“ The guilt confirm’d by surest augury.
“ Lictors !” he spake—and, from beside his chair,
The stern-ey’d ministers stepp’d forth—“ Prepare.”
Slaves of a cruel law ! In vain ! In vain !
Lay by that scourge, and drop that useless chain !
With listless eye, and still declining head,
He heard each word ; unheeding as the dead.
Until *her* frightful doom—*his* death of shame—
Sent a deep shudder through his fainting frame.
Forward, with one convulsive start, he sprung
From the supporting arm on which he hung !

His fetter'd hands stretch'd, clasp'd, towards the sky ;
A lurid splendour in his glazing eye ;
His nostril quivering with indignant shame ;
And kindling onward, like the spreading flame,
The last few life-drops, from their chilly nest,
Rush'd, in one mantling blush, from brow to breast !
'Twas but an instant—on his wounded side
The unheal'd gash's gore-glued lips divide.
First trickling drop by drop, as from the flow'r
Trickles the dew—then burst a short wide show'r.
Dying, on earth he sinks—and dying smiles.—Away !
Dishonour hath no power o'er that cold clay.

VII.

But where is she ? The destin'd of the tomb !
For whom the bridegroom waits in his dark home.
The bridal couch is made ! the banquet spread !
Then where is she ? The destin'd of the dead !

VIII.

His parting steps are o'er the Alban hills,
Unwearied wanderer of Space and Time !

Whose urn of light, yet unexhausted, fills

The founts of heat and life in ev'ry clime !

The Forum's busy crowds have passed away ;

The noisy glare and weariness of day.

'Tis eve ! and man forsakes his cares awhile,

To cool his cheek in daylight's parting smile.

Oh, blessed hour of rest this side the grave,

Soothing alike the monarch and the slave !

Well was thy space of pray'r and incense given

For wayward man to make his peace with Heav'n !

Nor, with his lusts yet reeking in his breath,

Enter the gates of darkness—perhaps of death !

Away ! then, from the stale and languid air

Of the pale city's hackney'd haunts of care !

And e'er the glory of the sunset hour

Contract a taint of dimness on its pow'r,

From that green mount, where looks the gate Colline,

O'er Latian fields, towards the Appenine,

Seek we, from rosy skies, hills, woods, and streams,

Store for the tranquil fabric of our dreams.

IX.

There's not a breath of air to stir the spray
That trembles as the wild bird darts away !
There's not a breath to curl the mirror fair,
In which the willow stoops to wreath her hair !
Peace sleeps upon the wood, the lake, the hill,
And in the heart,—which, gazing there, grows still.

Fair Italy !—Well might old Hanno's son
Weep to desert the sunny land he won !
He won thee—and, like some fair wanton prize,
Thou tam'dst thy conqueror with thy glorious eyes !
His helm unbound, in garlands thou didst wrap
The grizzl'd temples, pillow'd in thy lap !
But, hark ! 'twas Carthage call'd him as he slept,
Yes, he must go—he went—but going, *wept* !

X.

But what is this ? a grave ? whose earth, but now
Seems scoop'd and pil'd upon the hill's green brow ?

Yes ; and that pond'rous stone there, at the head,
The destin'd hingeless portal of the dead.
And yet—that gloomy cave would seem full large,
And deeply hollow'd, for its single charge !—
Methought, that, even now, I saw a beam
Of pallid lustre through its op'ning gleam.—
What have we here ?—Why, this is mockery !
What need of light and food for those who die ?
Why throws, all yellowly, that earthen lamp,
Its stifled radiance through the cavern's damp ?
And why, beside that low and rude-hewn bed,
That solitary cruise, and cake of bread ?
And who the inmate of this hearthless home ?—
What doth the living, dwelling in the tomb ?

XI.

But see ! the city's gate unfolds—and, wide,
A multitude pours forth its scatter'd tide.
And glittering arms, and robes of priestly white,
Glance, as they ope and close upon the sight.

Onward, though slow, they come—and now more plain
My eye discerns their forms who fill the train.
This, who unbending bears his weight of years,
Whose white hair on his purple robe appears
Like silver moonbeams in the dark blue skies,
Should be the Pontiff of Rome's Deities.
A cloud unwonted shades that blameless brow ;
Nor often looks that eye disturb'd, as now.
Some fearful portent, as I deem, hath come,
Of mustering wrath that threatens regal Rome.
And those white-vested girls, the stainless quire
Who cherish, night and day, the sacred fire ;
Before the majesty of whose meek eye,
And Vestal vow of forceful chastity,
The licitor's axe falls loose, and all heads bow,
E'en to the princely Consul's laurell'd brow.
What then hath quench'd the might of that pure name ?
They walk as those oppress'd by grief or shame.
Slowly, beneath the white veil drooping round
The head, bent fix'd and mournful to the ground.

Whom bear they in that litter, which the band
Of bare arm'd lictors guard on either hand ?
Perchance some noble corse, for which this cave,
Furnish'd in such strange guise, affords a grave.

XII.

She stood beside her tomb, as if the breath
Had fled, and left a lovely shape of death.
So stilly lay the lid upon her cheek :
Both of that paleness which no words can speak.
Round her cold temples wreath'd, her long bright hair ;
Clasp'd on her breast, her milky arms were bare ;
And bare her feet, beneath the one white vest
That swept the ground, depending from her breast.
She stood—and all were silent—even there,
All warp'd by Superstition as they were,
There was not one hard heart to snap the link
Which held that young life o'er destruction's brink.
At length, her sealed eyes faintly unclosed—
Around, a dreamy, wilder'd glance she throws.

Yes!—there, the hills—and, there, the beauteous Sun,
Sinking, his ocean palace nearly won.
How oft, behind Achaia's olive groves,
Setting, he smil'd upon the land he loves!
And she, a Grecian girl, from Corinth's height,
Gaz'd with proud fondness on that gorgeous sight!
But what stern eyes are these?—and what that place
Which seems to woo her to its dark embrace?
And where is Timon?—Ha!—That fatal night
Was he not seiz'd, and murder'd in her sight!
Why should *she* live? But ah! to yield her breath
Amid the thrice drugg'd bitterness of death!
With only that pale lamp's sepulchral light
To break the darkness of her endless night!
To feel her cruise and cake fail day by day,
Till, the last mouldy crumb consum'd away,
Her clammy lips, in lonely agony,
Sue for that priceless luxury—to die.
To moulder and return to dust, while rife
With all the vivid consciousness of life!

To feel the palpable, cold hand of Death
Stopping her heart, and chilling her warm breath !
Or worse, to feel her frenzied thoughts break loose
In all diseased reason's wild abuse !
To see strange hideous shapes before her eye,
And sit and laugh at her own misery !
And *she* feel this !—*she* ! who had once a home ;
A dear, blest home— a mother, too—to whom
Her sweet, light laugh was payment for the care
That ceaseless wrapp'd her, as a vesture, there !
Oh ! is there *none* to save her from the fate
Whose thought alone makes reason desperate ?
Is there no pitying eye ?—There is not one !
All cold, strange, stern—and she—left, lost, alone !
Alone ! no ! though the earth were o'er her pil'd,
One ear must hear—" My mother ! save thy child !"
Ha ! who is this, of foreign garb and face,
Who clasps her, sinking, in her close embrace ?
Whose lips are press'd upon her dewy brow,
As if their fervid impress there would grow ?

Who, of so mean a garb, such haggard eyes,
Dare step between their victim and the skies ?
Off! Would ye dare ? away ! the wrath is tame
Of tigers, to the rage that fills that frame !
And in that shielding arm there is the might
Of His who wields the thunder ! 'Tis her *right*,
A *mother's* right, in danger and disgrace
To shield her fair, wrong'd child ! And that embrace
The reeling shock of earthquakes could not sever !
Till Death shall strike the sinews loose for ever !

XIII.

And were they sever'd ?—sooth, I cannot say :
The closing circle snatch'd the scene away.
But some convulsion, violent and long,
Impell'd its circles through the wav'ring throng.
Yet all was silent—till no longer heav'd
The crowd ; whate'er the impulse it receiv'd.
And then, a stream of shrieks rang fierce and near :
But died in stifled echoes on my ear.

Should'st thou demand the moral of the song,
Which dwelt perchance upon thine ear too long;
If Fancy fail not in her sorcery—
And Ida and her fate compel one sigh—
Enough then—thou hast learn'd, that, hopes, and fears,
And love, and life, and death, change not with years.
But, in that shatter'd urn of antique stone,
A heart might moulder, broken, like thy own!

NOTES TO PART I.

I.

“ That orbéd temple ”—

Vesta was the goddess of fire. Her temple, of a circular form, according to Clarke's plans of Ancient and Modern Rome, was situated in the *Regio Forum Romanum*, on the declivity of the Palatine Hill, nearly on the site of the modern *Via delle Grazie*; about a quarter of a mile from the Palatine Bridge over the Tyber. The Palladium of Troy, the Penates of the Roman state, was supposed to be kept in her sanctuary. And a fire, the perpetual existence of which was thought to involve the safety of Rome, burned upon the altar.

The Vestal Virgins were maidens of the most perfect form, selected and consecrated to the worship of Vesta. They made a solemn vow of chastity, so long at least as they continued in the priesthood which was thirty years. Their office was to keep unextinguished the sacred fire, watching it by night alternately : to preserve the Palladium : and to minister in all the rites of the goddess.

Their dignity and privileges were most distinguished. Consuls themselves, and Prætors, giving way and lowering their fasces, whenever they met them in the street. They could pardon criminals, provided they met them accidentally.

But their conduct was guarded by laws as severe as their dignity

and privileges were great. The Vestal who suffered the sacred flame to expire, was scourged by the Pontifex maximus. And she who violated her vow of chastity was interred alive, with a little wine, water, oil, and a lamp, and a cake of bread, in a place called the Campus Sceleratus, near the Colline Gate of Rome. Her paramour was scourged to death.

III.

“Such as Phidias lov’d to trace.”

Phidias, son of Charmidas, born at Athens in the seventy-third Olympiad. He was contemporary with Pericles, who employed him in the public works of Athens.

He was, perhaps, the greatest sculptor of all antiquity. He wrought the statue of Minerva in ivory and gold, thirty-nine feet seven inches in height. Many of the beautiful fragments in the Elgin room of the British Museum are thought to have been cut by his chisel, or wrought under his direction.

IV.

“Penthesilea.”

One of those amiable females, who won men’s hearts by breaking their heads. She was queen of the Amazons, and was slain by Achilles in the later years of the Trojan war.

VI.

“That on Achaia’s mountains fir’d

“Flash’d forth in Philopœmen and expir’d.”

The Achæan league, the sunset of liberty in Greece, was a democratic alliance of several cities of which Corinth was one. It had ex-

isted before the time of Alexander, but at his death was involved in the miseries of discord.

It revived, however, with redoubled vigour, about 280 B.C. The Romans maintained a hollow friendship with the Achæans so long as they feared their union with Macedon; but when they had subdued Perseus, king of that state, they used every infamous art to undermine the league; and at length throwing off the mask, destroyed it by arms, 146 B.C., when Corinth was taken by that facetious connoisseur, Mummius, who, in sending the spoils of invaluable pictures and other productions of art to Rome, warned the officers to whom they were entrusted, that "if the aforesaid articles were injured they would have to buy new ones."

Philopœmen was born at Megalopolis in the last days of the league, he early distinguished himself as a general of the Achæans; he has been styled "last of the Greeks." Perhaps no hero of antiquity ever displayed greater qualities.

He was taken prisoner, through a fall from his horse, by the Mesenians, who had revolted from the league. Being shut up in a subterranean cell, (*thesaurum publicum*.—LIVY)—a goblet of poison was presented to him. He asked "whether Lycortas, the other general of the Achæans, and the cavalry were safe;" being answered in the affirmative, he cheerfully emptied the cup.

VII.

"Even as one *had* died."

Socrates, the victim of bigotry and prejudice.

XVIII.

"Spoils that they could not value.

See note VI. touching Mummius, the Roman general.

"In that old man."

Philopœmen.

XVIII.

“ Whose blood made glorious their mountain glen.”

Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans, who fell in the pass of Thermopylæ.

XX.

“ Lur'd by the falsehood of the coward slave.”

After the conquest of Perseus, the Romans summoned 1,000 of the most distinguished Achæans to their capital, to answer for the alleged crime of abetting Perseus. But when these arrived, they were confined as criminals in the different cities of Italy.

NOTES TO PART II.

III.

“ Still sitt’st thou proud,” &c.

Spain and Italy are still a prey to the most degrading superstition, but let us not laugh, “*mutato nomine*,” &c. Irving has just played, and his disciples are still playing, their “fantastic tricks,” at which I know not if the “angels weep;” but certain I am, that the devil laughs.

IV.

“ Their fellow-men in bands.”

Oh, America! America! do you write the annals of your slave trade in the same book with the name of Washington. Take care of your own sons, for freemen may not breathe with impunity the same atmosphere as slaves. It would have gone better with Sparta if she had never had any helots to hew her wood and draw her water.

IX.

“ Well might old Hanno’s son
Weep to desert the sunny land he won.”

Hannibal was the son of Hanno, the Carthaginian; at nine years of age he took an oath of enmity to the Roman name. After he had

invaded Italy, and been in possession of the fairest portion of that country for sixteen years, Carthage recalled him, as the Romans were on her coasts.

It is said, he shed tears on leaving the country which had softened the natures of the fierce Africans.

In the following piece I have endeavoured to express how much the colour of the external Universe depends on the state of the mental eye ; and the effect of sweet music, in clearing our jaundiced vision.

THE EVIL SPIRIT QUELLED.

I.

LORD of the beauteous world ! beneath whose eye,
Where mind sits thron'd in matchless majesty,
Creation cowers : before whose princely feet,
All-conqu'ring Nature takes her humble seat ;
Yet, think who made thee ! and forget him not,
Who can *unmake*, and *will not* be forgot !
Is that poor blighted thing, who writhes and raves,
Or drivels idiotic—whose dumb slaves,
The brutes, list wond'ring to his frantic cries—
The God who hurl'd defiance at the skies !

II.

There is no rest for those who roam

Burden'd with a broken heart !

No hope—no dwelling place—no home—

No human solace shall impart

To them the charm that made appear

All things of that sunny hue

That makes us wish to live, and love !

Chagrin hath spectred all they view.

Farewell all hope, below, above !

A wounded spirit who can bear !

III.

From hall to bow'r, from bow'r to hall,

The monarch pac'd, with listless tread,

Through rooms where Hebrew wealth had spread

Such gorgeous things as might surprise

The sated glance of kingly eyes.

A cloud is o'er the sight of Saul ;

A nameless horror round his brain,

And heart, hath wound an icy chain,

And cloth'd all nature with a pall.

What are to him the eye and voice,
Which make all other hearts rejoice ?

Her lyre-like voice—*her* matchless eye,
His lov'd—his wife ; whose heart is breaking,
Yet dare not give it vent, in speaking
To him who stalks regardless by.

But listen !—From that burden'd breast
A murmur breaks !—“ There is no rest !”—
“ There is no rest !” Nor doth he raise
The leaden madness of his gaze ;
Nor lift his head, nor arms, that hold
His stifled heart with marble fold.

IV.

He passes, and hath reach'd the hall,
Whose porch, from Gibeah's brow, commands
Outstretch'd, as in a vision, all
The fairest of created lands !
All gloriously the sun doth shine
O'er groves of olive ; fields of vine ;

O'er plains which snow-white sheep enamel ;
O'er hills where roams the meek-eyed camel ;
O'er woods, and streams, by whose bright waters
Are straying Judah's dark-eyed daughters ;
O'er valleys, white with Israel's tent,
Like stars in the blue firmament ;
O'er all that glads the raptur'd eyes
In God's own promised Paradise.
But no ! a foul eclipse is darkling

O'er that bright sun. The hills, and streams,
And woods, and tents, and pastures, sparkling
In a bright summer's brightest beams,
Are dun and murky—as doth seem
The bleak, dark, dreary land of some distemper'd dream.

V.

But, hark ! a sweet ton'd harp is ringing !
Hark ! a sweeter voice is singing !
From within that regal hall,
In whose wide portal standeth Saul.

VI.

“ By Jordan’s banks, in my sweet childhood’s spring,
In careless wanderings my footsteps trod,
Joyous with love for every beauteous thing,
Led by my guide and my companion—God!

“ The distant dells where Moab’s camels roam ;
And cedar glades, where boundeth the gazelle ;
The Desert’s Isle of Palms,—were each a home,
Where trusting innocence feared not to dwell.

“ Oh! might I be, once more, what I was then!
Live as I liv’d—and love what then I lov’d—
How glad I’d quit the impious courts of men,
And all my vain, hot manhood since hath prov’d.

“ Oh, climb not thou Ambition’s steps of gold !
The mountain’s turfy slopes more happy are.
Oh, trust not thou in man! though great and bold,
The God who led thy youth is greater far!”

A tear doth glisten on the cheek—
A sigh forth from the heart doth break—
His sleep is broke ! He turneth round,
All-thirsty for the blessed sound :
Which fell upon his heart, like rain
Falls on the parched desert plain.

A Hebrew youth is sitting there,
Low on the footstool of a couch ;
His unshorn locks of golden hair
Flow o'er a harp, that to his touch
Responds, in tones that through the breast
Reach, thrilling, to the soul opprest.

“ But, if that heart hath long forgot its peace,
Amid the eddies of thy life's dark flood ;
And those hard hands' once pure upliftings cease—
Now sear'd by rapine's grasp, or red with blood—

“ If thou hast left the God thou serv’dst in youth,
And *He* now leaves thee to thy own dark ways—
If, then, in lonely hours, the flash of truth
Lighten, through memory’s night, o’er bygone days—

“ Then weep!—yes!—weep repentant, blessed tears!
If such thou still can’st shed, not yet beguil’d
Of peace, thy heart shall quit its spectral fears,
And feel how sweet it is—to be once more *a child!*”

VII.

Fast as the summer rain drops fall,
Or wither’d leaf, and drooping flower,
On the pavement of that hall,
Fell the hot, heart-easing shower.
One hand supports his throbbing brow;
The other, in his bosom prest,
Grasp’d, with convulsive clutch, below,
The tunic on his heaving breast.

The evil hour is past—and pray'r
Pours calmly from his lip and eye,
While yet the Hebrew boy is there,
In meek, fond feeling, watching by.
And though, in after days, o'er Saul,
The shadow of that curse would come—
As oft did that sweet harp recall
His spirit to its peace and home.

THE FIRST-BORN SMITTEN.

I.

NIGHT hung o'er mystic Egypt's giant fanes,
And sleep sat thick, like death, on wearied eyes,
Throughout the voiceless cities of the plains :—
Silence was on the earth, and darkness in the skies.

Even in the middle night,
The cloudy portals of the south unroll'd !
A form came forth !—the Beauty of the Grave !—
Whose eyes were as a blight !
It pass'd :—and from the mountain to the wave,
In Pharaoh's palace, and the peasant's home,
The blood of sleeping man ran slow and cold ;
Before its breath, the cool pure air of night
Became the rank, foul vapour of the tomb !

II.

'Tis morn once more ! and all is life and light ;
The camel, rous'd, shakes off the dews of night ;
O'er marble fanes, the desert, and the sea,
The bright sun, rising, shines forth gloriously.
But, hark ! what strange, shrill plaint of mourning
Rises, with the day-star dawning !
The sob of grief—the shriek of agony—
Till Egypt echoes one wild funeral cry !

III.

The mother kiss'd her eldest child
Last night—her bosom form'd its bed—
The infant smil'd, and slept—this morn
Her arm was round the dead !
Like blossoms, scatter'd by the silent blight,
Lay Egypt's first-born, wither'd in a night !

TO E. C. (WHO DIED YOUNG).

FROM thy home in the far skies,

From fields of light

Beyond the ken of mortal eyes,

Spirit! pure and bright!

Look down on me!

From seats immortal, where thou sittest

On starry flowers;—

If our love thou not forgettest

In those sweet bowers—

Look down on me!

Smil'st thou, dear, at these dim eyes?

Dim with full tears—

Turn'd wishful, upward to thy skies!

Fancy-drawn, thy form appears

In yon blue sea.

And joy'st thou at the life unliv'd?

The thoughts unthought?

The joys unjoy'd ? the griefs ungriev'd ?
 And thy young spirit caught
 Hence, to be free ?

Love, smiling with broken heart ;
 Fair falsehood's lie ;
 Death-beds, where torn affections part ;
 Blighting poverty ;—
 Unknown to thee !

Ah ! unknown the pilgrimage
 Stormy and weary,
 From bounding childhood up to tott'ring age,
 Cold, grey, and dreary,—
 Unknown to thee !

Lov'd and loving didst thou live
 Mid joy thou madest.
 Gently reclined'st thine head at eve :—
 Into death faded'st !—
 Unknown to me !

E P I T A P H

FOR HOFER, THE TYROLESE PATRIOT.

BE'ST thou king or emperor,
 That drawest near this simple stone,
 Bare thy head ! Be proud no more !
 'Tis Hofer's dust thou stand'st upon.

This is his *Body*,—but his *Blood*
 Is sprinkled o'er each mountain glen,
 Where the patriot hero stood,
 The barrier of his countrymen.

Yet not alone entombed *here*,
 Doth the Tell of Tyrol lie :
 Seekest thou his sepulchre ?
 Our hearts !—His epitaph ?—That sigh !

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

PEACE be within thy snowy walls, fair island of the free !
And plenty, from thy teeming hills, smile o'er the crouching
sea !

Dear Isle ! since last I look'd on thee, a weary waste of brine
I've wander'd o'er, and many a land ; but none was like to mine.

I've sat beneath the almond trees, in vales of pleasant France,
And hoary hairs, and raven locks, were mingled in the dance.
I'll rest me on the restless waves, or Egypt's seas of sand,—
But not within thy palaces, thou fair and fickle land !

I've stray'd with proud and dark-ey'd girls, through orange
groves of Spain—

The barb steps not so springingly upon his native plain,
But, prone, to burly Bigotry, the god-like Spaniard falls,
Where Pride doth dwell in cottages and Poverty in halls.

I've seen the must'ring thunder crowd round Blanc's untrodden rise—

And watch'd the pale Venetian moon float o'er the Bridge of Sighs—

My foot hath thrill'd, oh, Italy! above thy Cæsars' graves—

I love—but would not dwell in thee—thou glorious land of slaves!

Where fountains play in jasper halls, in Eastern fairy land,

And silent cities of the dead stand lone in wastes of sand;

The scymetar's the sceptre there, of tyrant man's control:

And woman, lovely slave of lust, a form without a soul.

The strip'd and starry gonfalon is floating far and free,

O'er mountain, lake, and cataract,—bold children of the sea!

Across the hoarse Atlantic's waves I stretch a brother's hand,

But the rocky isle, which once was *yours*, is still *my* native land.

Her sons are brave, her daughters fair, none *braver* or *more*

fair:

There's comfort in her cheerful homes ; there's freedom in
her air :

I've wander'd east, west, north, and south, each varied climate
o'er—

And come back to my native Isle, to love her yet the *more* !

DIRGE,

FOR A MAIDEN WHO DIED ON A SPRING MORNING.

Lo ! the burnish'd gates of morning

Open on the night !

O'er th' eternal hills are dawning

Health, and life, and light !

Why waits the soul ? towards the springing day

Gazing from out the portals of the mind ?

Why, fluttering in its ruin'd house of clay,

Pause ? ere its trembling wings leave all it lov'd behind ?

See ! the sick room taper paleth
 With the lamp of life ;
 The breath, the pulse, the motion faileth—
 Now, hath ceas'd the strife.

Close ! close those eyes ! there is no tenant now
 To throw her glances through those crystal panes.

Mourn ! mourn ! but with a sorrow deep and low ;
 Fitting the quiet look of these calm, pure remains.

Wrapp'd in robe of vestal whiteness,
 Lay her on her bier,
 Where the sunshine's balmy brightness
 Shines around most clear.

Strew ! strew the flowings of her golden hair,
 In silky wavelets, down her marble neck :
 Ye meek-ey'd girls, your early flowers prepare ;
 And all sweet antique rites, the virgin corse to deck.

Hark ! the sad voic'd bell is tolling

Measur'd strokes of woe.

Now clanging on the breeze ; now rolling

Moaningly and low.

Lift ! lift the bier, it calls us to the grave.—

The path her feet with ours may not retrace,

Raising, with dying wail, the dirge's stave ;

Gliding in slow array, with silent, lingering pace.

Heaven's chorister, the lark, is singing

In the golden cloud ;

Dainty, gemmed flowers are springing

From their earthy shroud ;

Man dies—but changeless nature does not mourn,

Then, smile, thou sun ! thou restless streamlet, play !

Thus to the grave, should Innocence be borne

Tho' yearning hearts *will* ache ; and sobs *will* burst their way.

Where the turf most freshly groweth—

Where no rank weeds wave—

Where the matron daisy bloweth—

There—is dug her grave.

Upon thy dreamless pillow lay thee down,

Where Silence and Corruption watch thy bed,

In that dark house where thou must dwell alone,

There rest thee, maiden dear ! 'till earth awake her dead !

I heard a voice from Heaven, crying—

“ Write thou down this word—

“ Blessed ! Blessed are the dying !

“ Dying in the Lord ! ”

Their task is done—they do not toil—nor weep.

The Slanderer and the Oppressor cannot come

To them ;—all visionless their sleep—

The Innocent and Just do live beyond the tomb !

THE VOICE AND THE LYRE OF THE GIRL
THAT WE LOVE.

LIKE the mystical fire
That darts from above
Are the Voice and the Lyre
Of the Girl that we love!
They kindle the brain—
They strike through the heart—
The pleasure to pain
Thrills in every part,
From the tones of the Lyre of the Girl of our heart!

Like the words of a spell
Binding kings to their thrones
Are the accents that swell
And unite with those tones.

Now melting to sadness,
 Gush fast springing tears,
 Now tortur'd to madness
 With hopes and with fears,
 By the Voice of the Girl that our bosom holds dear !

Not the voice of the bird
 Who sings to the night,
 When far waters are heard,
 By the moon's liquid light—
 Not the voices at even
 Which swell from the shore
 Of the lake-mirror'd heaven,
 Come dyingly o'er—
 Like the Voice and the Lyre of the Girl we adore !

WRITTEN IN THE EMPTY THEATRE OF DRURY
LANE, AFTER THE DEATH OF MALIBRAN.

No more, to me, this gorgeous dome
 Seems of refined joy the fane,
 But dark and void, as some vast tomb,
 Where Silence and gaunt Horror reign !
 For dead, no more to live again,
 The forms that peopled it with life :—
 And hush'd, no more to wake, the strain,
 With music, meaning, feeling, rife :
 Where Art and Nature strove with glorious strife.

The dead—but see ! the scene extends !
 The mountains ! and the rustic mill !
 And lo ! the sleeping maid descends,
 While hearts and eyes with horror thrill :
 But down the death-strown pathway still

The dreamer comes—each sense control !

Those lips their every nerve shall fill
With the wild agonies that roll
Beneath the slumbers of a wounded soul !

Alas ! 't was but my fancy's dream,
'Tis all that's left, to wake in thought
Each faded scene ; and fondly deem
We hear that voice with magic fraught.
But if, in future years, unsought,
An urn our children's hands uncloze,—
And there the myrtle branchlet wrought,
In gold * its deathless emblem shows,—
'Tis *there* the bones of MALIBRAN repose.

* In opening a vase from Athens a golden sprig of myrtle was found.
It was probably the funereal urn of some highly-gifted woman.

OCCASIONED BY BYRON'S " LAMENT OF TASSO."

TASSO ! thou wert not lonely in thy fate ;
 Thine was the lot of spirits like thy own
 Etherial essence. Such have still the hate
 Of those whose souls are earthy mists alone.

Search in the records of our race, and find,
 If thou *canst* find, the name of *one*, in whom
 Th' immortal flame was cherished by his kind,
 Who did not mourn, like thee, his splendid doom—

To feel within his heart the quenchless thirst
 Of love for *all*, who pay it back in scorn—
 To wear a priceless jewel, which is curs'd
 To the poor wretch alone by whom 'tis worn—

Pride link'd to Want—the living to the dead :
 Wisdom—the mate and scoff of brainless swine :
 The free-born muse imprison'd, for her bread
 Striving to eke the mercenary line.

If such a life were all, and did we lie,
 With all our labours, even as we fell—
 Then, those who eat, and drink, and sleep, and die,
 Without another thought, have chosen well.

But 'tis not so—though *they* will die, be sure,
 And feed the earth, wheron they did subsist ;
 All mortal, nought was in them to endure,
 And none shall ask if such did e'er exist.

For *thee*, and such as thee, there is a life
 Enduring beyond death—throughout all time—
 Throughout all space—and there shall be a strife,
 Who most shall honour thee in ev'ry clime.

Then sweetest bard ! lament not ; but resign
 This life to them who prize it for its sake ;
 They have their portion *now*—thou shalt have *thine*—
 Such as the empire of the mind can make.

TO T. H. T.

ON VISITING OUR SCHOOL, AND FINDING IT IN RUINS.

 I DID not think again to feel

These vain regrettings of the past ;

I deemed that time and truth would steel

Our fond and foolish hearts at last.

But, could I here by words recall,

As then I felt, my thoughts, the while

We wandered through that ruin'd hall—

'Twould cost my friend a sigh, or smile.

 I am not *old*, but *youth* hath brought

So much of sorrow, that this heart

Not always kindles at its thought,

Or burns to meet, or breaks to part.

Yet, where we've learn'd, and laugh'd, and slept,
 And felt—we ne'er shall feel again
 As then we did—I could have wept,
 That ruin in that place should reign.

And *their* young voices seem'd to swell
 As once—but why with vain regret
 Depict the past? You know too well
 What *was*, what *is* we will forget.

Yes, we'll forget, and never more
 The ivy of fond use shall bind
 This heart, like that which once it wore;
 Whose parting leaves such scars behind.

Let halls be ruin'd—friends grow cold—
 Our dog prove faithless—love, untrue—
 Romance and youth may weep; the old
 And wise will laugh, like I and you.

For tears will dim the brightest eye,
 And sighs will wear the firmest breast ;
 And few would mourn us should we die,
 Then live and laugh :—'tis much the best.

THE CHARM.

LADY, when those laughing eyes
 Lose their lamps of living fire,
 And their circlets' violet dyes
 In wan and twilight grey expire ;—

Lady, when those locks that lend
 Their golden setting to thy brow,
 With wither'd, warning white shall blend,
 And flow not free, as they do now ;—

Lady, when the foot whose kiss

Coquets with the enamour'd ground,
Stiff and wearily shall press,

Tottering where it used to bound ;—

Lady, would'st thou know a sleight

Of force to re-illumine those eyes,
Steep thy hair again in light,
And make thy step as soft as sighs ?—

In thy wildest mirth be wise :—

Pure of heart, and true of tongue.—
This will win all hearts—all eyes—
Be thy body old or young.

LINES ON A DEAD CANARY.

WHAT art thou, Death! that strikest thus unseen?

Lo! here thy victim lies, but where art thou?

And what?—that thus the mighty and the mean,

A monarch and a bird fall by thy blow?

Thou answerest not—yet, to my fancy's eye,

I see thee, phantom, smile in mockery.

Whence art thou, Death? where is thy dwelling-place?

Hast not a home of silence, sleep, and night,

In the vast tombs of Egypt's eldern race:

Whose rankling mummies own thy kingly right?

Or dwellest thou in chaos—heaven—or hell?

The living ask in vain—the dead alone can tell!

FIDELITY.

“ During this mournful spectacle, the little favorite dog, starting from the robes under which he had been concealed, sought by his caresses to restore animation to the insensible corse; and, lying down between the headless shoulders, moaned piteously as he licked the blood of his devoted mistress. Touched by this instance of brute sympathy, the executioner suffered him to keep his place; and even the Earl of Kent shewed to the poor animal an indulgence denied to the last moments of the unfortunate Mary. Two days after, the dog died, as it was believed, of grief.

“ It is worthy of remark, that the statesmen and courtiers, who had discarded all faith in human attachments, honoured this trait of animal fidelity, which was mentioned in the official account transmitted to Lord Burleigh.”—

Miss BINGER'S *Memoirs of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. ii. page 468.

It was a touching thing to see,
 That little dog's fidelity ;
 When, starting from the sable train,
 Where he, unseen, till now had lain,
 Shrieking, he sprung towards the breast
 Through good and ill he lov'd the best ;

And, crouching closely, laid his head
 Upon the maim'd and gory dead ;
 Faint moaning, as he lick'd in vain
 The red dye of each bloody stain.
 It was a touching thing to see,
 Even to hearts of enmity :
 And they, whose eyes refus'd to shed
 One drop of pity for the dead—
 Stern and relentless—even *they*,
 For shame perhaps, drove him not away :

But constant on her bier he lay,
 And neither for caress nor force,
 Would he desert that headless corse ;
 But watch'd it, sleepless, night and day ;
 And when the grave receiv'd its dead,
 He laid him on her earthy bed,
 And died—all worn and craz'd with grief—
 Faithful, past sterner man's belief.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS LATE ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER ;

BEING REFLECTIONS IN ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR, ON THE NIGHT
AFTER THE FUNERAL OF THE DECEASED PRINCE.

“ Semita certé
Tranquillæ per virtutem patet unica vitæ.”

JUVENAL Sat. 10. 363.

THE living to the world—the dead to sleep
And silence ;—each hath pass'd away ;—
The pomp, the glare, and sorrow's black array,
Give place to vacancy, and shadows deep.
Where memory and grief their vigils keep,
Unvexed by the eye of laughing day.
The moon is up, and through her airy halls
Moves silent, flinging cold, o'er tower and tree,
Her flood of virgin light, whose spell enthalls
Each haunted spot of Windsor's royal lea.

Come fix'd-ey'd Thought ! thou physic of the soul,
Spread o'er my sadden'd mind thy calm control :—
While night and death sit thick upon the brain,
And these lone aisles, fit scene for fancy's train ;—
Which now, their native light, the moonbeams, gild ;—
Teem with the shapes and whisperings of eld.

Hark !—'twas a murmur !—do the dead rejoice
Below, for their new guest ? Alas ! no voice
Breaks from the tongueless tomb ;—silent they lie,
A never parting, solemn company.
The ancient, and the corse of yesterday
Are fellow-guests,—the same—both dust, or clay ;
That little *difference of life* once fled,
Who reckons up the birth-days of the dead ?

On high, the haughty banner's pictur'd fold
Waves in the voiceless air ;—the great and bold
Own not these trophies ; through the gaping casque,
The fleshless jaws grin out, as through a mask ;—

The vacant stall is Death's,—their banners wave
Some days,—and then—the trophies of the grave.

Are these his *only* trophies?—Let the eye
Of Memory wander where the moonbeams lie,
In mellow radiance, on the classic tomb
Far down that vaulted aisle.—Know'st thou whose doom
Those figures image forth?—For whom, ador'd,
The heart heav'd sobbings of her mourning lord
Were but the least of sorrows that were shed,
When frantic millions wail'd o'er Charlotte dead.

Dear, honour'd spirit!—at whose sainted name
Our quenched regrets rekindle into flame—
How many, since, of thy once numerous line,
Have pass'd, to death, this marble cell of thine!
How many,—who have miss'd thy hand of love,
And smile of comfort, and the lips that move
In Heaven-winning prayer,—when Death's long night
Is nigh,—and shadows thicken on the sight!

Yea!—even to day, the portals of the grave
Have op'd their noiseless valves ;—the great, and brave,
And virtuous hath pass'd—the shadowy bourne
Is clos'd,—and we remain—awhile to mourn.
For he who died, whose eyes thou should'st have clos'd,
Was natur'd like thyself ;—one, whose repos'd
And gentle spirit, wore its gorgeous dress
In suffrance,—that it might have power to bless.

The soul is weary, and the ear is vex'd
With Fame's dull, noisy tales,—the cry annex'd
To this world's wonders,—yea !—enough of blood
Hath flow'd, and earth is glutted with the flood.
Enough of pomp !—whose spectacles are stale
As tiresome, oft-repeated fairy tale.—
Enough the pride of theory hath spun
Of cobweb fabrics, glittering in the sun !—
Whilst, one by one, each faithless hope, that buoy'd
Man's heart, hath burst, and left a sick'ning void.

Yes! as his heart, who long hath roam'd in lands
Unbless'd;—in dewless wastes of lonely sands,—
Whose ceaseless glare turns Heaven's life-kindling ray
To fire,—that sears the glass of sight away:—
Or pin'd and wasted on a Tropic sea,
Whose waves are shoreless as eternity;
Where Hope grew sick, as, day by day, she ey'd
The molten gleaming of the restless tide.
Yes! as his faded heart, and clouded sight,
Grows green with hope, and brightens with delight,—
When, to his flooded eyes, th' horizon yields
The spring tide verdure of his native fields;—
So turns the mind from prospects that are rife
With restless vanity, and glare, and strife,
To the green landscape of a good man's life.

When last the tomb's still tenant met this eye,
Quick with the motion of vitality,
Warm flash'd the eager glance of buxom day
Down bristling ranks of gaily stern array: -

The warrior's gallant panoply was bright
With peace, the ranks unbroken by the fight ;
And youth's transported breast was, thrilling, made
To feel a triumph in the gay parade.

A warrior's pride was in his ready smiles,
As pac'd his charger down his chosen files ;—
A righteous pride !—for braver hearts than those
Ne'er panted on the steel of Britain's foes.
And *they* were proud, whose glory 'twas to have
For chief, their Prince, belov'd, humane, and brave.

So short a time !—and glory's brilliant day
Is chang'd to lurid torch-light,—war's array,
And brazen-throated clangour, and the hum
Of crowds, sunk to the death-note of the drum.
Yet, but this once—the warrior's requiem o'er—
Their chieftain leads the way to death no more.

Lo! where dark Cam reflects, with sluggish wave,
Grey towers, whose hoary feet his waters lave ;
Where youth, observant, tends the chair of age,
Prepar'd to grave, upon the open page,
Those laws the telescopic eye shall trace
Written in depths of planet-peopled space :
Where low-brow'd thought, and hermit study dwell,
Science hath dropp'd her tube, and sought her cell,
To watch and weep for him, whose guardian pow'r
Gave peace unbroken to her studious hour.

See! where yon taper palely gleams on high,
Like a lone star amid a wintry sky ;
Behind whose ray a youthful head is bent
Low on his hand,—and though no tears have vent
Within his eyes, the mirror'd mind hath caught
A deeper, sadder shade, from mournful thought.

Oh! who can tell what young hearts feel and fear,
When honour's first triumphal arch is near!—

That glow, with which the victim, worn and weak,
Feels not the hectic burning on his cheek ;—
The hope, that clears anew his failing eye ;—
The strength, that lives when wasting sinews die !
Oh ! who can tell how dear the smile that cheers
Those first and fellest struggles of our years !
How dear the hand, whose kindness won us on
With gen'rous love !— How miss'd and wept when gone !

Yet, Gloucester ! were this all, were these alone
The titles that thy pow'r and rank had won ;—
Alas ! the formal herald oft hath read
A longer style, above the thankless dead.
Others have led and fought, whose natal star
Shone fuller with the doubtful light of war :
Others have bought what bards must scarce refuse
To sell,—the name of “ Patron of the Muse.”
No !—warrior or prince, who lives for fame,
When dead, shall have his hard-earn'd prize—a name :

But while his selfish end by nought endears
Remembrance,—let him never claim our tears.
No! ye blest founts, that first refresh'd man's eyes,
When strain'd towards his home, lost Paradise ;
Giv'n by a pitying god, to vent a part
Of pain, in welling from the stiff'd heart!—
Their shades alone, whom doating Mem'ry brings,
Cloth'd in Love's light, unlock your sacred springs.

Ye fill their eyes, who waken from the womb,
Upon a world which hath no hope—the tomb
Closes the orphan's prospect o'er life's wild ;—
And no fond, guiding voice exclaims “ My child !”
Who, fed and cherish'd by a stranger's hand,
Become *his* children, nor can understand
Their lot ;—until they wait, some gloomy day,
To watch his hearse darken the public way.

Ye mingle with their food, whose sinews, strain'd
Beyond their pitch with toil, have barely gain'd
The daily crust ;—whose luxury 'tis to say,
“ 'Tis well, I feel no famine for to-day.”
When he, who sought and found their wants, and gave
The noblest bounty that their wish could crave ;
The pow'r to earn, unbow'd by slavish fears,
Or crimes,—a solace for their wintry years ;
The pow'r to see this world, fair, as 'twas meant
For man to see,—to bless their God, and be content ;
When he, in spirit, still may see them grieve,
And still may pity, but no more relieve.

There is an incense from the hearths and homes
Where fresh created happiness hath dawn'd, which comes
Before God's holy altar, sweeter far
Than that which steams from reeking fields of war.
There is a whisper, which, when Glory's cry
Is scatter'd to the winds,—ascends on high,—

The poor man's pray'r.—But, see ! the morning beam
Flings through the tinctur'd pane its chilly stream.
Without, the world awakes to light and life.
Forth ! Let me hence. Some few more days of strife—
Some few short days, and we shall meet again,
The heart unveil'd, to know whose hope was vain.
To know for certain, if from God and Fame,
Man and his deeds receive a diff'rent name.
His ways are not as ours, and though mankind
Laud their destroyers, or perplex'd and blind,
Bow to the gaudy phantom—human pride ;
Yet, when the day shall come, that, side by side,
Naked, and poor, and equal, all shall wait
The changeless fiat of immortal fate.
When Life's short dream, and Death's short sleep are past,
And Man, astonish'd, wakes to truth at last ;
How many, then, the might of whose renown
Shook the encumber'd earth ; whose smile or frown
Was sunshine or eclipse to men, who deem'd
Their idols great and happy, as they seem'd,—

Joyful, my prince ! would cancel, could it be,
Their glory, to have liv'd and died like thee.

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